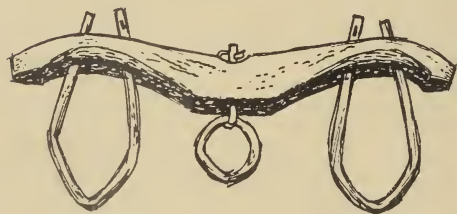
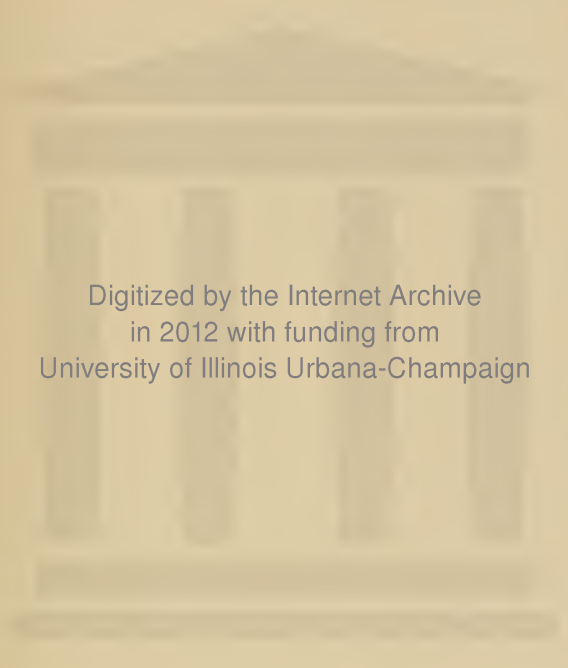


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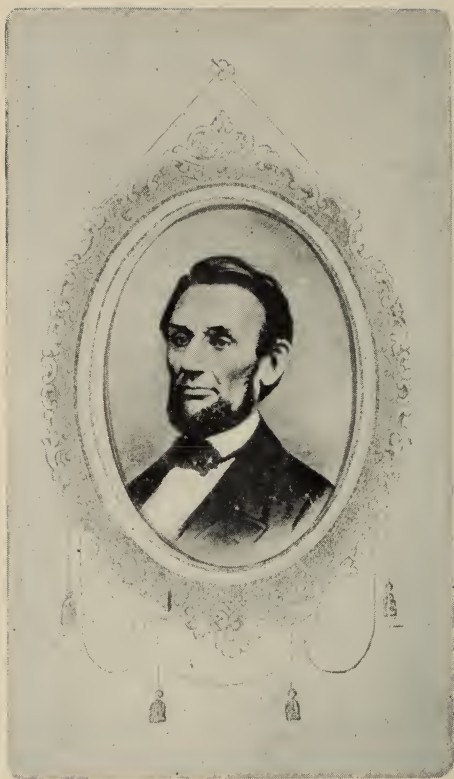
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ABRAHAM LINCOLN

SERVANT OF THE PEOPLE



Copy of an original daguerreotype owned by the author. President Lincoln presented this to a soldier serving at Fort Totten, one of the many small forts just outside of Washington. The author procured this from the soldier's family.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN
SERVANT OF THE PEOPLE



BY
CARL E. WAHLSTROM
Judge of Probate, Worcester, Massachusetts

1942
ACHILLE J. ST. ONGE
Worcester, Massachusetts

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Lincoln Room

TO

MARGARET AND LORNA

HOW IT CAME ABOUT

ONE DAY, some years ago, two dignified and elderly gentlemen called at the office to see me. As they approached my desk I noticed that they were attracted by a picture which hung on the wall near by. It is a rather unusual picture of Lincoln delivering the Gettysburg address. So interested were they in my picture that I watched without saying a word. Finally one spoke and said, "It was in 1862 that I met Lincoln at City Point in Virginia, and I carried his bag up to the camp. He was dressed exactly as you see him in that picture. He wore that long Prince Albert coat and carried a shawl on one arm." Then the two gentlemen introduced themselves. One was a nephew of Clara Barton and the other was that great authority on the "Life of Lincoln," a man who had devoted many years to a study of Lincoln, namely, Dr. William E. Barton. He

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stated that because of some correspondence we had had together and because of evidence he had found in papers in the Probate Court of Worcester County and elsewhere he was able to prove that in one respect the great Lincoln had blundered and that he was about to publish the result of his investigations in a book to be called "A Beautiful Blunder."

You will recall that during the dark days of the Civil War Lincoln's attention was called to certain records. These records seemed to indicate that one Mrs. Lydia Bixby of Boston was the mother of five boys who had enlisted in the service of their country and all of whom had been killed in battle. This information so stirred the tender heart of Lincoln that he wrote to Mrs. Bixby one of the most sympathetic letters ever written. So beautiful was this letter that it has become known thruout the world as a gem of literature. It was to this letter which Dr. Barton referred when he said Lincoln had blundered, for by his investigation he disclosed that only four of Mrs. Bixby's sons had served their country; that two of these had died in battle and that one of the other two sons had deserted to the enemy. He proved conclusively that two sons, one of whom had not been in the service, lived in Massachusetts for many years after the close of the war.

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I mention this little episode, not because it is of any particular value, altho it may be of interest to Lincoln students, but because my own interest in Lincoln and in the collection of Lincolniana was the immediate result of my contact with Dr. Barton. I had always had the average American boy's interest in Lincoln, but there was something about my brief association with Dr. Barton that caused me to take a keener and more enthusiastic interest in the life of the Great Emancipator. Since that time I have, in my own little way, made the study of Lincoln and the collection of Lincoln items my hobby and so many of these have I been able to procure that I have set aside two rooms in my attic and there I have my own private Lincoln museum. This consists of more than one thousand books and pamphlets—(many old and rare)—hundreds of pictures and cartoons, numerous coins and medals, broadsides, busts, old magazines, newspapers and several other items, including some original Lincoln letters, documents and legal papers, which are of interest to the Lincoln student.

One who desires a hobby can find a most interesting one in Lincoln lore, for the field is very large. To date over five thousand books and pamphlets have been written on some phase of Lincoln's life and it is said that with each succeeding year fifty new books or articles about

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Lincoln are produced. No other American has so captured the imagination and fancy of the people. Because of my interest in the Great Emancipator I have often been invited to address various groups on some phase of Lincoln's life. This I have done gladly and the address herein presented is one which I have delivered in one form or another numerous times. The only reason for having it appear in print is because so many kind friends have requested me to permit it to appear in book form.

THE AUTHOR

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LET US journey together to a country-side place not far from the little city of Hodgenville in Kentucky. There on a knoll in the distance we see what appears to be a magnificent structure of granite. So beautiful and stately is it that we are reminded of those gorgeous temples of ancient Greece. Soon we approach it and ascend the flight of broad steps. Then we enter, and we find ourselves in a room where there is but one object. It is a rough, crude log cabin about seventeen feet long, twelve feet wide and eleven high to where the roof begins. It has but one door and one window. Its floor is of dirt. It is typical of the log cabins which stood in this section of Kentucky in the early days of the nineteenth century. But why has this lonely, wilderness cabin been selected and placed in this great temple of stone, there to be preserved for the ages? Of course we know the answer, for in that self-same lowly, wilderness log cabin was born on the twelfth day of February in the year eighteen hundred and

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nine, a babe, who was destined to become one of his country's greatest servants and the sixteenth president of these United States.

It has been my privilege to stand in reverence and with bowed head at this consecrated place, and there breathe a prayer of thanks to Almighty God that I, too, am permitted to be a citizen of so great a country, where one of humble birth in the lowly, wilderness log cabin, may by and thru his own efforts and the confidence he inspires in others attain the highest office within the gift of the American people.

Let us now continue our journey to a place called Oak Ridge Cemetery in Springfield, Illinois. As we enter this hallowed place we see a stately monument. From its center rises a shaft heaven-ward. At the foot of the shaft stands a life-size statue of the martyred president. On the four corners of the monument we see bronze groups portraying the various branches of the military service. As we approach the base we observe a huge bronze head of Lincoln. This is a replica of that great work done by Gutzon Borglum and which is in the Hall of Fame in our Nation's Capitol.

We see a doorway and we learn we may enter and as we do so we find ourselves in a rotunda, the ceiling of which is of silver leaf, the walls of bronze and marble and the floor of travertine.

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As we look about we see nine statues of Abraham Lincoln portraying him as the ranger, the soldier, the circuit rider, the debater, the statesman and the president. As we proceed thru the elaborate corridor we soon enter the stately sarcophagus chamber. On the red oak fossil cenotaph we read the inscription "Abraham Lincoln, 1809-1865," and we then realize we are within the walls of the tomb, the final resting place of the body of our great president. We pause in reverence. Our hearts beat fast. Tears come to our eyes. Our voices quiver as we try to whisper the immortal words spoken by Secretary Stanton to the world as Abraham Lincoln breathed his last, which words we see inscribed above and to the rear of the magnificent cenotaph, "Now He Belongs to the Ages." We look about and learn that in vaults in front of the cenotaph are buried the bodies of Mrs. Lincoln and two of the sons. In the rear of the cenotaph are placed several flags, seven of these being the flags of the different states in which the various Lincolns resided, and it is a matter of pride to a resident of Massachusetts to note that the first flag in line is that of the old Bay State, for it was in this state that the first of the Lincolns came and settled in 1638.

Lincoln's tomb is one of the stateliest structures ever erected to the memory of a man. As we

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stand before this edifice we become possessed of the loftiest and noblest thoughts and hopes for the future of our beloved country. We think of Washington as the Father—we must call Lincoln the savior and preserver. This shrine, this noble tomb is an enduring memorial erected by a grateful people.

But we must continue our journey, and now we find ourselves in our nation's capital, at a charming spot in Potomac Park. From this point we see the majestic Washington Monument, and just beyond is the Capitol itself. At this delightful place on the banks of the Potomac a grateful country has caused to be erected a shrine, a monument to the memory of a great son. The first concerted effort toward the erection of a memorial to Abraham Lincoln was in 1867, but it was not until 1910 that Congress authorized the appointment of a committee to arrange for the erection of a suitable monument, and yet it was not until February 12, 1914, that ground was broken. There are certain things about the memorial that are unique and interesting. It rests on a solid rock foundation from forty-four to sixty-five feet below the grade. It is two hundred and four feet long, one hundred and thirty-four feet wide and ninety-nine feet high. It is made of Colorado marble, some of the blocks weighing as much as twenty-three tons. Thirty-eight

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great and beautiful columns surround it, each column representing a state, there being but thirty-eight states in the Union when Abraham Lincoln was President. Over eight years were spent in erecting this memorial and it cost approximately three millions of dollars.

This monument is the cause of marvel and wonder. It is one of the most gorgeous structures ever designed by man. But impressive and imposing as it is, it is not the edifice which creates within us the most interest and reverence. No, for as we ascend the great steps we see directly in front of us a huge marble statue of the Emancipator, the greatest of all Lincoln statues, that done by Daniel Chester French. It is nineteen feet high, nineteen feet wide, and it rests on a marble pedestal ten feet high. But someone asks, "Why do you call this the greatest of all the Lincoln statues when there are so many?" I refer to it as the greatest of all Lincoln statues for in the face of that great work the sculptor has been able to portray all the various phases and moods of Lincoln's life. Stand directly in front of it, as I have done numerous times, and you see the fatherly, neighborly Lincoln. Stand to the left and you will see the plainsman, the rough, story-telling man of the West. Stand to the right and you will see the statesman, the thinker, the emancipator, the president, stern and yet kind,

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deliberate and yet determined, patient and yet forceful. Yes, because the sculptor has been able to portray all the phases and moods of Lincoln in that great face, that statue portraying him as he sits in that canopy of stone can rightly be termed the greatest of all Lincoln statues. The statue and the magnificent structure of marble which surrounds it have been termed the noblest and grandest memorial in the world. In truth this monument is the most eloquent tribute to the memory of any man by any nation.

Were we to continue our journey to the various Lincoln monuments and memorials we would have to travel far and wide. We would have to visit over fifty cities in eighteen states. Yes, we would also have to go abroad, for several foreign countries have honored our Lincoln. So great is his fame and to so large an extent has he found a place in the hearts of the people that he can no longer be claimed by Americans alone, for now he belongs to the world. Just outside of Westminster Abbey in London stands a replica of St. Gaudens' Statue of the Emancipator. In Manchester, England there is another. In the beautiful cemetery in Edinburgh, Scotland is still another, and yet another in Florence, Italy, and still another in Oslo, Norway. But of all the foreign countries it was left to Denmark to do the most remarkable thing, for the Danes have set

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aside a tract of land on which they have erected a replica of the birthplace log cabin. Thus they have their own Lincoln Memorial Park.

More statues, more monuments, more busts and plaques have been made and erected, more books have been published, more pictures have been printed and painted, and more medals have been struck off concerning Lincoln than any other person who has ever lived save the Lord himself. And why? Someone has suggested that Abraham Lincoln was an outstanding failure. And it is true that he did fail in many things.

He failed as a business man—as a store-keeper.

He failed as a farmer—he despised this work.

He failed in his first attempt to obtain political office.

When elected to the legislature he failed when he sought the office of speaker.

He failed in his first attempt to go to Congress.

He failed when he sought the appointment to the United States Land Office.

He failed when he ran for the United States Senate.

He failed when friends sought for him the nomination for the vice presidency on the Republican ticket.

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Yes, he was a failure, a glorious failure. However, each failure only served to strengthen him. But his failures do not explain why he is honored more and more with the passing years. And why is this so? He was neither king, prince, nor potentate. He was not wealthy nor learned. He was not a great military hero. To people of modern times he has come to be a symbol of courage and opportunity not only for Americans but for boys and girls, men and women in the far-flung corners of the earth. Small wonder then, that folks like to have told and re-told the old Lincoln story which is so thrilling, alluring and inspiring.

Everyone likes to hear how in 1638, just eighteen years after the Pilgrims settled in Plymouth, one Samuel Lincoln landed and settled at Hingham, a little town just south of Boston. Samuel had a son Mordecai, who also had a son named Mordecai, who when he came to man's estate left the stern and bleak New England coast and went to New Jersey and later to Pennsylvania. He had a son, John, who went to Virginia. This John Lincoln had a son Abraham who became a prosperous Virginia farmer. Abraham had a friend who distinguished himself as a hunter and woodsman, one Daniel Boone by name. Boone had been to what was considered the far West several times and he often told his friend, Abra-

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ham Lincoln, of the great forests filled with wild game, of the wonderful lakes and ponds filled with fish and of the fertile plains where crops would grow in great abundance out there in that western country beyond the Blue Ridge Mountains. These stories so impressed and thrilled Abraham Lincoln that he and his family packed their belongings and crossed the mountains and finally came to a place called Green River in Jefferson County in Kentucky. There they settled and established a home. Here Abraham and his sons cleared the ground and tilled the soil. One day in 1784, soon after the close of the American Revolution Abraham was out in the field working. Playing close-by, was his young son, Thomas. All at once Indians came out of the forest, killed Abraham, and one picked up little Tom, intending to run off with him. A brother in the nearby cabin, hearing the commotion, ran out to see what was happening and sensing the danger he raised his rifle, aimed, fired and killed the Indian who was carrying young Tom. The other Indians disappeared into the forest. That little lad Tom, who was so nearly captured by the Indians, was destined to become the father of the man who has been honored above all men. He became father of Abraham Lincoln, our Civil War President.

After this sad episode the widow Lincoln and

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her family moved from this place to a home where there was more security. When Tom grew to manhood he did the customary thing; he freed himself from his family and went off to earn his own livelihood. He made his way to a little place called Elizabethtown. Here he became an apprentice carpenter and in due time he was a skillful workman. Unfortunately Tom Lincoln has not fared well at the hands of the historians. He has been pictured as an ignorant, lazy, good-for-nothing man, poor white trash, a father and husband who had no ambition, a man who had rather hunt and fish than care for himself or his family. Such stories are not true. The records show that historians and writers have slandered and libelled Tom Lincoln. Go to the records and what do you find? You find that in almost every place Tom Lincoln lived he owned real estate and he had his own home, which he furnished with furniture made by himself. He paid taxes, he was a member of the guard of the militia, and a guard at the jail. He helped to survey and lay out roads. He served on the jury. He appraised property. He loved his family and while he was an illiterate frontiersman yet he could write his name, and he did more than the average man of the frontier for his little family.

In 1806, while still in Elizabethtown, Tom

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Lincoln married the charming Nancy Hanks, a God-fearing, intelligent girl who could both read and write, which was a remarkable accomplishment for a frontier girl. For a time the newly-weds stayed in Elizabethtown but at the end of two years Tom tired of working for others. He wanted to be his own boss. He wanted a place of his own and thus he took his wife and their first-born, a daughter, Sarah, to a farm at Nolin Creek not far from Hodgen Mills or Hodgenville. And it was here that the son Abraham was born on February 12, 1809. Here the family lived for two years when Tom decided to move because the soil was poor and it was very difficult for him to provide properly for his family. He had learned that up at Knob Creek some eight miles away the soil was better and thus he moved his family to this place. Here they stayed for about five years, when Tom learned that across the Ohio River in Indiana there were more fruitful lands. He decided to visit these lands and investigate for himself. He built a raft, placed tools and provisions thereon and set sail. Altho his little craft was wrecked he finally reached the Indiana shore and after trudging some sixteen miles he came to a clearing called Pigeon Cove. The place impressed him and he staked off a tract of land and then returned to Kentucky for his family.

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Upon returning to the Knob Creek home he packed his household possessions, groomed his two horses for a long journey and with his little family started for the new home. Abraham and his father rode on one horse and Nancy and Sarah on the other. Leaving the horses on the Kentucky side of the river they ferried across to Indiana and then went either by a team of oxen or by forest sled to Pigeon Cove. They reached this place in December, 1816, and this was to be Abraham Lincoln's home for fourteen years. At once the father built a temporary shelter, a lean-to cabin, open on one side. In this most unsatisfactory shelter the family lived thru-out the winter until a rough and crude cabin could be erected. This new cabin differed but slightly from the cabin at Hodgenville, the principal change being that a loft was built into it where the boy Abraham slept on a bed of leaves. The new home, which had no floor, was furnished with some three-legged stools, a rough table and a few tin and pewter dishes, pots and kettles. When spring came a plot of land was cleared for garden purposes. Corn was planted, and as wild game and fish were plentiful the family did not want for food. However, the settlers in this community had a difficult time. It was not a healthy place in which to live. There were swamps all around and the water was very

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poor. In 1818 a pestilence called the milk-sickness swept the community. Nancy Lincoln went about bringing cheer and comfort to her neighbors who became afflicted. In so doing she worked hard, became weakened and contracted the disease and died. The boy Abraham was only nine years old and the death of his mother left no great impression on him. His emotions were no different from any other child of that age. He did help his father make crude coffins for the mother and others who had passed away and all were buried without any particular rites. It was months later that a Baptist clergyman came to the settlement and preached a sermon over the graves of Nancy and others who had been buried in the little cemetery. I have visited the Pigeon Cove settlement and with reverence I have paused before the grave of Nancy Hanks Lincoln and have read the inscription on the modest stone marking the grave. A friend had erected a very elaborate marker over the grave some years ago but it was so out of place in the plain country graveyard that it was soon removed. Today the site of the Pigeon Cove settlement is known as a memorial park, which numerous Lincoln pilgrims visit annually.

Time is a great healer of sorrows and worries. And this was particularly true in Tom Lincoln's case, for it was only a little over a year

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after his wife's death that Tom Lincoln told his children he was going to Elizabethtown. He did not tell them his reason for going, but he had a good reason. He had learned that the girl whom he had courted as a young man had lost her husband, and that her three children needed a father as his two children needed a mother's care, and therefore he had decided to visit her at her home in Elizabethtown and propose that they marry. Tom must have been very persuasive for when he made the proposal to Sarah Bush Johnston she at once accepted him and soon they were married. Sarah was an ambitious, energetic woman, intelligent and efficient. She had been accustomed to a higher standard of living than had Nancy Hanks. She possessed more of the better things of life than Nancy had ever known. As soon as possible she and Tom started for Pigeon Cove. You can imagine the looks on the faces of Abe and Sarah as they saw the wagon drive up to the little cabin with a new mother and two brothers and a sister for them. And how their eyes must have opened wide when Sarah's pewter, her dishes, her fluffy comforters and the other household effects were unloaded and brought into the cabin. From the very beginning Sarah showed her good qualities, showed she had a mind of her own and that she knew how to use it. At once she insisted that the cabin be

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made more comfortable. A floor was put on, another window was made, the structure was whitewashed, more furniture was made and when the material comforts were attended to she turned her attention to the children. She at once recognized in Abraham something which no other person had ever seen. She saw in him a spark of greatness, and she believed it was her God-given mission to help develop and foster that spark of greatness. She told him stories of the great world beyond the forests. She helped him to read and write. She it was who bundled him off to school the few months he went to school. She was the inspiration of his youth and in later years when he expressed his feeling for his mother by saying that all he was and hoped to be he owed to his dear mother I do not think he referred to his natural mother, Nancy Hanks. No, I believe that tho he revered her memory he actually referred to his saintly stepmother, that noble woman who had recognized in him a characteristic, a quality, which none other had seen and who devoted her energy and motherly wisdom to develop the mind and soul of the frontier boy.

Abe grew to manhood in this community. Here he read and reread the few books which came to his attention. The Bible, Aesops Fables, Pilgrim's Progress, Robinson Crusoe, A United

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States history and Weems' "Life of Washington" all impressed him greatly and they all became part of him. It was in this community that he began to read the newspapers and thus came to learn that he was a citizen of a new and great country. Here he discussed with his neighbors the issues confronting the nation. Here he learned to express himself, and here he gained the respect of his friends and neighbors because he saw things so clearly. Here, too, he gained a reputation as a strong man, for there were few men who could run faster, wrestle better, or sink an axe deeper into a log than could Abe Lincoln. But these feats of physical strength had no great appeal to him. His mind was developing. Then the time came when he was given an opportunity to take a cargo of freight down the river to New Orleans. Of course, this opportunity he grasped eagerly and you may be sure that his eyes were opened when he made this trip on the flat-boat down the great river. Upon his return home he learned that his father had decided to move the family over into Illinois where he thought the land was richer. Abe helped the family to move and settle in a little place near Decatur. It was at about this time that Abe attained the age of twenty-one years and then he did the natural thing—that thing which all frontier boys had always done—he left his family and went off to

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make his own living. The big question was, where should he go? Ah! Yes! He had heard of a little village called New Salem. Folks there boasted that it would some day rival Chicago in size, for it, too, was on a waterway. True it was on a waterway, on the shallow, muddy Sangamon River. To this new town Abraham Lincoln made his way. Here he fell in with one Denton Offutt, a carefree but successful merchant. When Offutt learned that Abe had been to New Orleans with a cargo of freight he employed him at once to take another cargo down the river. Lincoln was delighted until he learned that he would have to build a boat or raft. However, he soon set to work and the raft was finished and then with the help of a companion he loaded it with freight and began the journey down-stream. It was on this second visit to the South that Lincoln saw the evils of slavery. Here he saw slaves sold on the auction block. Here he saw families separated. Here he saw children taken from their parents. And it was here that the evil of slavery so burned itself into the bosom of Abraham Lincoln that he vowed if ever he could he would hit that thing and hit it hard.

Upon his return from this journey he decided to settle in the little village of New Salem. At once he went to work for Offutt in his grocery store. Offutt was very proud of Lincoln and fre-

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quently boasted about his great strength and his athletic prowess. These boastings came to the attention of the Clary's Grove gang, and their leader, Jack Armstrong, decided that he and his cronies should go to New Salem and take a look at the man who was the subject of this boasting. Lincoln, of course, was not looking for trouble but when Armstrong and his gang arrived at New Salem it became necessary for Lincoln to defend himself. He and Armstrong engaged in what was supposed to be a wrestling match but which turned out to be a match of strength and wits. Before long Armstrong was surprised to find himself thrown to the ground with Lincoln on top of him. Armstrong's natural inclination was to call on his gang and pitch into the new-comer who had thrown him, but even Armstrong had a sense of honor and self-respect. He realized that he had met his match, a much better man, and instead of making further trouble for Lincoln he insisted that Lincoln was the stronger and that if ever he needed any help the Clary's Grove boys would be glad to come to his assistance. Thus instead of making an enemy Abe Lincoln won a staunch and loyal friend, and years later when Jack Armstrong's son Duff needed a friend he was pleased that Lincoln, the lawyer, was willing to come to his assistance. It was by and thru Lawyer Lincoln's shrewdness

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that Duff Armstrong was acquitted of a murder charge.

It was while Lincoln was working as clerk for Offutt that the governor of Illinois issued a call for volunteers because the Indian Chief Black Hawk was on the warpath again. Lincoln, who had no responsibilities to any person, quickly volunteered to serve as a soldier in the Indian campaign. You can imagine how pleased he was when the members of his company elected him their captain. Never before had his ability as a leader been recognized, and in later years the recollection of this event remained for him one of his most cherished memories.

Lincoln's term of service in the Black Hawk War did not last long. He had not had a very exciting time. In fact, during the entire campaign he had seen only one Indian, a poor, drunken redskin who came tumbling into camp one night. The soldiers wanted to kill him so they could boast to their children and grandchildren that they had spilled Indian blood. But Captain Lincoln would not permit such action.

In later years Lincoln used to say that the only blood he spilled during the Indian War was mosquito blood. After his term of service was over he made his way back to New Salem. He had to walk because someone had stolen his horse. He had not been back in the village long

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when he learned that a political campaign was being conducted and that the Whigs needed a candidate for the General Assembly. Lincoln, having no job, was glad to offer himself as a candidate. He went about making speeches which were not too profound. He told the people that he was poor, humble Abraham Lincoln; that he would be pleased to represent them; that if they voted for him it was all right, but if they didn't it was just the same. Such half-hearted appeals did not make any impression, for the people did not elect him.

Still without work, he and one Berry decided to go into business. Altho neither had any money yet they bought a store and gave the seller a note in payment. From the beginning the venture was destined to fail. It is said that when folks came to the store to buy merchandise they could find neither of the partners, for Berry was often under the counter "sleeping off a drunk," while Lincoln was outside under a tree studying law. And to make matters worse Berry died leaving Lincoln with a bankrupt business. It took him seventeen years to pay the business debts, but he paid every dollar due. He often referred to this as his national debt. Once again Lincoln was without a job and again friends came to his assistance. Altho he was a Whig politically yet he had friends among the Democrats, who were

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in power, and they were able to secure for him the position of postmaster of New Salem. From this time Abraham Lincoln was the best informed man in the community, for it is said, that he read all the mail before he delivered it. Of course, this new position did not pay him a large salary and therefore he had to do all sorts of odd jobs so as to be able to subsist. It was during this period that he split rails, farmed and performed all kinds of chores for his neighbors and friends. Once more his Democrat friends helped him for he was appointed assistant to the county surveyor and now we find Lincoln seriously studying the intricate problems of surveying. He became a good surveyor as is shown by some of the plans which were made by him and which have been preserved. He had not been a surveyor long when another political campaign lured Lincoln away from his new job. Again he sought election to the Assembly, but this time he went about making constructive speeches. He had learned much since his defeat. Now he spoke to his neighbors about the need of highways, improved water-ways, banks and various other improvements. And Lincoln won the election and then borrowed money to buy clothes so he would be presentable at Vandalia, then the capital city of Illinois.

It was at about this time in Lincoln's life that

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he became interested in the ladies, and thus I deem it proper to digress at this point and make mention of Abe Lincoln and his love affairs. We are all familiar with the stories concerning the courtship of Abe Lincoln and Ann Rutledge. This episode happened shortly before his election to office. I must warn you that as with so many other stories about Lincoln most of those we hear and read about Lincoln and Ann Rutledge are in the realm of myth. More myths have come into existence concerning Lincoln than about any other American. We do know that there was a beautiful girl named Ann Rutledge. We know she lived with her uncle at the Rutledge Tavern in New Salem. We also know that she was betrothed to one John McNeil otherwise known as John McNamar, and that he had gone East to adjust certain business matters, promising to return—and marry Ann. However, with the passing of time his letters to his betrothed became fewer and fewer and then the time came when Ann was convinced he would not return. She then began to accept the attentions of the tall, awkward, ungainly Lincoln. We know, too, that Ann became seriously ill and died and that Abe Lincoln mourned her passing with much sorrow. But we also know that within one short year after he had mourned the loss of his beloved Ann this same Abraham

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Lincoln was in love again, and this time with a rather stout and buxom lass from Kentucky, one Mary Owens, by name. She could talk louder, longer and faster than any other person in the community. Why the slow of speech, slow moving and slow thinking Lincoln should have fallen in love with this loquacious creature is a mystery. But he did. In fact, he wooed her so ardently and so long that the time came when he felt he should do the manly thing, namely, propose to her. And he did. He proposed once and she refused him. He proposed twice and she refused him. He proposed three times and she refused him. And not until Abraham Lincoln had proposed to her three times and had been refused three times did he really understand that Mary Owens did not want him.

He was now serving as a legislator at Vandalia. Before long he was instrumental in having the capital moved to Springfield. It was also at this time that he was admitted to the practice of the law and he entered into partnership with that venerable politician, John T. Stuart. It was in Springfield soon after he arrived there that Lincoln met a third girl and he immediately fell in love with her. Her name was Mary Todd. She was visiting with her sister and brother-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Ninian Edwards, prominent folks of the new capital city. Mary Todd was a charm-

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ing little lady from Lexington, Kentucky. She came from a very fine family and had been reared in a cultured atmosphere. She was educated and spoke French fluently. She was intelligent and knew her mind. To her friends she had confided that the man she married would some day be president. And then she set out to find that man. When she arrived in Springfield she found two men, both of whom, she believed, were presidential possibilities. The first was named Stephen Douglas. Born in Brandon, Vermont, he had lost his father when he was a mere youth. His widowed mother had taken him out to what was then considered the far West. There in the state of Illinois he had, by his own efforts, gained an education and achieved distinction in politics and in the law. Yes, Mary Todd was right when she recognized sparks of greatness in Steve Douglas.

The second man who interested her was that new lawyer, that fellow Lincoln, who was a new-comer to Springfield. She saw in him something which only his own stepmother, Sarah Bush Johnston Lincoln had seen when he was a small boy. Soon Mary Todd made her choice and Lincoln was her man. A great many myths have grown up concerning Abe Lincoln and Mary Todd, the most celebrated being the so-called marriage and desertion myth. According to this

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fanciful story the day for the wedding was set and the great day arrived. The bride appeared on time as did the clergyman, the witnesses and the guests. But the groom failed to put in an appearance. This is only one of the numerous myths concerning Lincoln and Miss Todd. We do know that their courtship was stormy; that they quarrelled and that they became estranged. But we also know that they were reunited by and thru efforts of kind friends and in due time they were married. We also know that from the beginning Mrs. Lincoln began to make good her boast that the man she married would some day be president. It was her opinion that the royal road to fame was in the field of politics and thus she was instrumental in having her husband announce that he was a candidate for Congress—and he was elected. On to Washington he went and there he spent two miserable years or one term as a representative. At the close of his only term in Congress he went north to New England.

It was on the twelfth day of September, 1848 that Abraham Lincoln appeared in the little city of Worcester in the heart of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Why he came to Worcester no person at that time knew, and really nobody cared. It happened that a Freesoil Convention was to be held in the little City Hall the next

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day and that a pre-convention meeting was to be conducted the evening of the day of Lincoln's arrival. Alexander Bullock, a prominent citizen and future governor, was chairman. During the day he had learned that all the speakers for the evening meeting had sent messages that they would not be able to be present. Naturally Mr. Bullock was nervous and worried. Someone told him that a Whig congressman from Illinois was at the hotel that stood then at the corner of Main and Elm Streets. This gave him a thought and a hope and he at once went to the hotel to see Lincoln, and invite him to be the speaker that night. Lincoln accepted and was pleased to do so. He was then invited to dine with a group of prominent citizens at the Levi Lincoln mansion on Elm Street just prior to the meeting. It has been noted that Lincoln claimed no kinship with the Massachusetts Lincolns nor they with him, altho we have since learned that all are of the same family. Lincoln remembered the dinner as the finest he had attended up to that time. The evening came—Lincoln made his speech, and a good one it was, altho the Worcester newspapers, being of another political faith, hardly made mention of it. On the morrow Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Bullock went to the railway station and there welcomed the delegates to the convention as they came from the many surrounding towns.

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Lincoln then disappeared. He did not stay for the convention. Soon after he went back to Illinois to practice law. He expressed the opinion that he was all thru with politics and that he would devote all his time to the practice of his profession. It is interesting to note that in later years, after Lincoln had returned to politics and gained great fame, Mr. Bullock liked to tell his friends that there were three things about Lincoln which impressed him as they sat together in the little hotel in Worcester on that September afternoon in 1848, namely, Lincoln's searching questions, Lincoln's piercing eyes, and his long linen duster. It was recalled, too, that on that one and only occasion that Lincoln spoke in Worcester, he wore that long duster and from time to time he put his hands in his pockets and as he spoke he pulled the duster up under his arms and when he emphasized some particular point he pulled his hands from the pockets and the duster would fall down almost to the floor. This, of course, made a rather amusing scene.

Upon his return to Illinois Lincoln did enter into the practice of the law in earnest. In those days the state was divided into circuits and the court, instead of sitting at one particular place, went about from town to town. Most of Lincoln's practice was in the old eighth district, which was said to be the largest in the state. We

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are told that Lincoln was the only lawyer who went around the entire circuit with the court. He tried cases wherever the court was in session. Soon he had a very large clientele and very often he was retained to try cases for other lawyers. He came to be a lawyer's lawyer. Because he went around the entire circuit it was necessary for him to stay away from his home about six months of the year. This absence from home has given rise to another peculiar story about Lincoln, namely, that he was having difficulties with his wife and therefore welcomed the opportunity to go around the circuit. Really two schools of thought have come into existence regarding Lincoln's frequent absence from home. One school would have us believe the story of domestic difficulties in the Lincoln household. We do know that Mary Lincoln was a rather difficult person to live with. She was obstinate and stubborn and had a temper which showed itself all too often. But we also know that her easy-going husband needed prodding, needed someone to stimulate him into action—and Mary Lincoln was the person he needed. Lincoln recognized this fact. He knew that his wife was the person who inspired him and spurred him on. To say that he feared her and stayed away from home on the pretense that he was a busy man is not correct. He loved Mary and their boys and it was only because he

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was a busy lawyer and had to attend to his practice that he was away from home so much. The second school of thought which advances this opinion is correct in its view. Records show this. They show that Abraham Lincoln actually argued one hundred and seventy-five cases in the Supreme Court of Illinois besides carrying on his practice in the circuit court and in his office. This is no small accomplishment even for an outstanding lawyer of the present day.

It was during this period when he was so busy at the Bar that he became interested in matters which were happening in the country. People were discussing slavery in all its aspects. The Missouri Compromise had been repealed. Territories were clamoring for admission into the Union as states and always the question was, shall they be slave or free states? The Kansas-Nebraska Act was on the lips of everyone, it seemed. Stephen Douglas was now a distinguished United States Senator from Illinois. He was preaching and proclaiming the doctrine of popular sovereignty. He and many others believed that each territory, on its entrance into the Union, should have the right to decide for itself whether it should be slave or free. It was this doctrine which irritated Lincoln and influenced him to again become interested in things political. He voiced the thought that the doctrine of

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popular sovereignty was erroneous. Mind you, he did not oppose slavery as such. He did not approve of it in the states north of the imaginary line drawn by the Missouri Compromise. His view was that if the southern states desired to maintain slavery that was their business, for it had existed in the south and been a part of southern life for a long time. Thus when Douglas returned to Illinois and informed his constituents that he was a candidate for re-election, Lincoln announced that he would be a candidate for the same office. At that time election to the United States Senate was not by popular vote but by the state legislature. Soon after he had made known his decision Lincoln did a rather smart thing politically—he challenged Senator Douglas to a series of debates on the slave issue, and Douglas accepted. It is difficult to understand why Mr. Douglas agreed to debate Lincoln. He was known thruout the country as an able statesman. He was a leader of the Democratic Party. He had every reason to believe that he would be his party's candidate for the presidency at the next election. On the other hand, who was this fellow Lincoln? Oh, yes, he had been a Congressman. But that was one phase of his life which he was willing to forget. He had gained an enviable reputation as a lawyer, but only in central Illinois. Compared to Douglas,

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Lincoln was an unknown man. By the debates he had everything to gain and nothing to lose. On the other hand, Douglas had nothing to gain and everything to lose. However, Douglas saw fit to accept Lincoln's challenge and after arrangements were made the candidates debated at seven different places in the state. These debates attracted the attention of thousands. Yes, the entire nation read about the debates, and people began asking, "Who is this man Lincoln?" Also they were saying, "He seems to clarify the slave issue better than any other man." People in the East especially wanted to know more about Abraham Lincoln.

As the debates drew to a close Lincoln was convinced he would not win the election, but he also realized that because of the debates he had advanced his own cause politically and that possibly a higher office than United States Senator awaited him. Thus, with the election over, Lincoln began again to practice law but not wholeheartedly, for the affairs of state, the condition of the country, had an absorbing interest for him now. He began to build his political fences. He visited and talked with political leaders. He kept abreast of the times by reading leading newspapers. Then a happy event occurred. He received an invitation to speak in New York and he accepted, for he was politically-minded enough to

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realize that this was his great opportunity. On the evening of February twenty-seventh in the year 1860, when he stood on the platform at Cooper Union, he faced a critical audience. Many had come out of mere curiosity as tho he were some monstrosity from the wild and woolly West. Others had come to scoff at and scorn him, but all stayed to applaud. Never before had a fashionable New York audience heard the issues of the day discussed with such clarity. His visit to New York was a glorious triumph. He returned home a victor. He knew that from a political point of view he would have to be reckoned with. He also knew that within a few months the Republican National Convention was to be held in Chicago and that with proper action on his part, and on the part of his friends, his name would be submitted to the convention, and that probably he would be the standard bearer for the Republican Party and then the next president of the United States. The thought pleased him. The thought also pleased his friends, and he had many in Illinois. Above all the thought pleased his wife and made her very happy. Under the able leadership of the corpulent Judge David Davids the friends were mobilized. They prepared to advance on Chicago. Lincoln, too, was busy. He did everything a good politician should do under the circum-

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stances. Then the great day came. The Republicans assembled in large numbers in Chicago. The name William H. Seward was on the lips of many who believed he had earned the right to be President. And surely he had. He was the outstanding Republican of the day. He had been governor of New York. He was now serving as United States Senator from the great Empire State. He, like Douglas, was an outstanding statesman. The day for the balloting arrived and on the third ballot Abraham Lincoln, the rail-splitter from Illinois, was nominated by the Republicans. And then the campaign began in earnest. The Democrats were divided. Douglas, Bell, Breckinridge, all sought the office of president against Lincoln. Thus it was fairly certain that the Republican nominee would be victor. He made no campaign himself. He stayed at home in Springfield and awaited the outcome and when the final result of the election was made known he prepared to go to Washington and take over the reins of government from that man who lacked both courage and vision, John Buchanan.

Strange as it may seem the best book about Abraham Lincoln, the President, has not as yet been written. We do have excellent works such as those by the late lamented Dr. William E. Barton and the beloved poet of the people, Carl

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Sandburg. But for the complete life of President Lincoln we must wait yet a while longer. When Robert Lincoln's papers and records are available, as soon they will be at the Library of Congress, I believe some historian or literary genius will then be in a better position to portray for us the fuller life of the Civil War President.

Much has been said and written of Lincoln and his kindness, his sympathy and his patience. We often forget, in fact, many do not know that Abraham Lincoln as President also had to be stern, severe, unsympathetic and at times seemingly unkind. It is true that he was kind and sympathetic. Whenever the life of a soldier was at stake, because that soldier had fallen asleep at his post, or had deserted, Lincoln was sympathetic and kind. But there were times when the President refused to interfere. Many soldiers were shot because he would not grant a pardon. More can be written about the stern, unsympathetic, fighting President. He had to be stern and unsympathetic at times. He had to be a fighter in order to prosecute that war to a successful termination.

There is another phase of Abraham Lincoln's life as President which is not too well known. It concerns his difficulties with the office-seekers, of whom there were many. These he handled admirably. He could not give jobs to all but he

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could give them a hearty handshake and a cheerful word. Many were sent away without a job but were convinced that their President was a great leader. On occasion he had to be stern with the office-seekers, in fact, it is recorded that once, at least, he threw an insulting fellow bodily out of his office. The occasion of the visit of the group of clergymen who sought an office for one of their number is both interesting and entertaining. They asked him to appoint a clergyman to the office of chaplain in the army. Lincoln, being a careful executive, called for the records and the law governing the appointment of chaplains and found there were no vacancies, and that under the existing law he had no authority to make the desired appointment. But the clergymen were insistent. "Was not the President Commander-in-Chief of the military forces?" "As President surely he could do as he desired." They became stubborn. They refused to listen to reason and the President soon saw it was useless to try to talk to them and thus he resorted to that habit he had formed years before to get him out of a predicament. He told them a story. "Gentlemen," he said in substance, "your insistence and stubbornness make me think of the time I was back in Springfield when I saw my friend Tommy sitting in the gutter playing with mud. I stopped and watched him and asked,

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‘What are you doing, Tommy?’ Tommy looked up and said, ‘I’m making a church. Here’s the pews; here’s the altar; there’s where the choir sits.’ And he went on mentioning other things and then he stopped. ‘Yes, yes, go on, Tom. Where’s the minister?’ I asked. ‘Oh!’ continued Tommy, ‘there ain’t no minister because there ain’t enough mud.’” And the visiting clergymen evidently saw the point.

More can be written of President Lincoln and the difficulties he had with the office-seekers.

The President had a great deal of difficulty with members of his cabinet. There was Seward, the man who believed he should have been president. He had been Lincoln’s chief rival at the convention in Chicago. When Lincoln became President he named this rival his Secretary of State and no sooner had Lincoln assumed the presidency when Seward suggested that as he had had so much experience he should be permitted to conduct the affairs of the executive. He intimated that he could carry on the duties of the presidency with Lincoln, of course, holding the title. Lincoln was no figurehead and he refused to be and his words and actions convinced Seward that his little scheme would not work. And that self-same Seward lived to see the day when he was able to tell the world that Abraham Lincoln was the greatest of them all.

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Lincoln had difficulties with Salmon P. Chase, that proud and conceited man from Ohio. He had named him Secretary of the Treasury. It seemed that with the change of every wind and every time he could not have his own way Chase would resign. But Lincoln, knowing him to be a good administrator, only tore up his resignations and threw them into the fireplace and then kept Chase on the job. And when our country needed a strong Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Lincoln elevated this same man to this exalted office.

Then there was Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War. Lincoln and Stanton had met years before in a court room in Cincinnati. It seems that Lincoln had been retained to argue an important case and he prepared himself with great care, and then went to Cincinnati. Upon his arrival in court he learned that his client had retained the services of a distinguished eastern lawyer, one Stanton, by name. When Stanton saw Lincoln he hardly noticed him and insisted that he could not argue. Lincoln, of course, was disappointed and took no active part in the trial of the case from that time. And yet when President Lincoln needed a good Secretary of War he selected the man who had treated him with something akin to contempt in court years before. He appointed Edwin M. Stanton to this high position.

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One day Lincoln proposed a certain measure to his cabinet and there was much opposition to it. Lincoln called for a vote. He said, "All in favor, say 'Aye.'" He alone voted for it. Then he said, "All opposed say 'Nay.'" All of his cabinet members voted against it. "The 'Ayes' have it," continued the President. And it is said that within the short course of a month all came to him and confessed they had been in error; that his vision was greater than theirs, for the measure had proved to be most advantageous.

Against the advice of his cabinet he freed the slaves. Could he have saved the Union by freeing some or none of the slaves he would have done so. But finally when he saw that emancipation of the slaves was for the best interest of the country he issued the proclamation despite the opposition of his cabinet. For a time the country was stunned. The proclamation met with scornful criticism abroad. But Lincoln's vision was clearer than that of his cabinet members and others. Soon the wisdom of his action was recognized. Also he had kept his promise with God for he had vowed that if victory came to the Union forces at Antietam he would free the slaves. Victory came and the slaves were freed. More can be written of President Lincoln and the difficulties he had with his cabinet.

More can be written of the President and the

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difficulties he had with his generals. There was that man McClellan, arrogant and conceited. Lincoln knew his nature and temperament and yet because he believed him to be a good organizer and drill master he tolerated him. Time and again he urged him to advance, to fight, but McClellan showed no inclination to battle and finally Lincoln had to remove him. It was this same, surly ex-general who had the effrontery to oppose Lincoln when he sought a second term.

Lincoln had difficulties with other generals, too. He had to censure Frémont, Meade and others. Yes, he made and removed general after general until he found that man Grant, and then despite much adverse criticism he named Grant Commander because he believed him to be a fearless, courageous and loyal leader and fighter—and this Grant proved to be.

More can be written of President Lincoln the religious man. And Abraham Lincoln, the President, was a religious man. I know that there are those who have called him infidel, agnostic, atheist and liberal. I know that there are those who do not believe that he was religious. As a youth he came under the influence of the so-called hard-shelled Baptists. Their teachings, their manner of living, their harsh doctrines, their difficult beliefs made him rebel and were to him unbearable. Theirs was a God of hate.

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Lincoln could not understand this for he wanted a God of love. Later in life as a lawyer he was influenced by his own partner William H. Herndon, who was an outspoken radical religiously. At this time Lincoln did become a doubter. However, when Abraham Lincoln became President he soon realized that his mission, his job, his responsibilities, if you will, were so great, his burdens so heavy and his duties so arduous that neither he nor any other human being could bear them alone. He needed help and he learned that there was a God from whom he could get assistance. For proof go to the records. Read what Bishop Simpson has to say. Read what Father Chiniquy, Henry Ward Beecher, Bishop Janes and Dr. Gurley have written and be convinced that Abraham Lincoln, the President, was a religious man. There are records which show how he became a praying president. He prayed with Dr. Beecher. He attended prayer services at Dr. Gurley's church. He prayed God to give the Union victory at Antietam. He prayed before the battle at Gettysburg.

I like to tell the story of Gettysburg. It was in the evening of July third, 1863. Lincoln and members of his cabinet, as was their custom, had gone to the telegraph office in Washington to await messages from the various battle lines. On this night Lincoln was anxious to hear from

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General Grant whom he hoped might capture Vicksburg. Nine o'clock came and there was no message. Ten o'clock and no message. Eleven o'clock and still no message. Midnight—a message came, but it was not from Grant. Rather it was a message from an unknown man, and the message was just this, "The Union forces have been victorious at Gettysburg." Lincoln was disappointed because he had not heard from General Grant. He, of course, had learned that there might be a battle at Gettysburg and he had prayed for victory there. But he was so absorbed in Grant's movements that he had not given any thought to the meaning of a Confederate victory at Gettysburg. Four days later he learned of Grant's victory at Vicksburg. By this time he also had come to realize that Gettysburg was the turning point of the war.

I now take you on to November 19, 1863. A great throng has gathered on the battlefield at Gettysburg. They are there to help "dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting place to those who there gave their lives that this nation might live." The orator for the occasion was the great statesman from Massachusetts, the scholarly Edward Everett. The President, too, had been invited. None of the committee had believed that he would accept. But he did. He arrived in Gettysburg on the night before the ex-

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ercises. On the day of the dedication he rode a horse in the procession to the field. He sat on the crude, rough platform and listened to the great oration by Mr. Everett, who spoke for two hours. Were I to ask if anyone in any American audience could give me just one sentence from this great address I am certain none could do so.

When he had concluded there was music and then the chairman for the occasion, in a very casual way, introduced the President, saying he was to give a few brief remarks.

Mr. Lincoln arose and ambled rather awkwardly to the front of the platform. He adjusted his glasses. It was noted that he held a paper in one hand. He spoke for four minutes to the assembled throng, yes, to the entire world, and he gave to all the immortal Gettysburg address. Were I to ask if anyone in any American audience could give me a sentence from this address I know that there would be those who could stand and give, not one sentence, but the entire address. They would begin with the eloquent words, "Four score and seven years ago," and close with those words which have burned themselves into the hearts of liberty-loving people the world over, "That government of the people, by the people and for the people shall not perish from the earth."

More can be written about the President who

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was hated and despised by many people both in North and South. I would not leave you with the thought that Abraham Lincoln was loved, honored and respected by all even in the North. No, there were those who believed him to be a demagogue and tyrant, who held him responsible for bringing ruin to a once great American Republic. And then the day came when the real tyrant had his way. On April 14, 1865 the great Lincoln was assassinated.

It is interesting, if not significant, that it was on Palm Sunday, 1865, that the Confederates surrendered, that on Good Friday Abraham Lincoln was assassinated, and that on Easter Sunday memorial services were conducted thruout the length and breadth of our land in honor of the martyred President.

Since that time the question has been asked frequently, Suppose Abraham Lincoln had lived—What would have been his policy for reconstruction? What would have been his policy for the North? For the South? Mark Sullivan, the learned newspaper correspondent has tried to give an answer. In Volume five of his monumental work "Our Times" Sullivan says that while Lincoln had promised and proposed generous terms for the South yet Congress rejected his policy of peace and mercy. There were those who called for revenge, repression, gov-

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ernment of the South as conquered provinces by force. "But," continues Sullivan, "Lincoln had the good fortune to die five days after the surrender of the Confederates. His death coming at the peak of his military success and fame, silenced his enemies and made his place in history unassailable."

Be that as it may, I only know that when all seemed so dark and dreary, when it seemed as tho the great American Republic was to be rent asunder, then

*"From fifty fameless years in quiet Illinois
was sent
A word which still the Atlantic hears
And Lincoln was the lord of his event." **

* (From the play "Abraham Lincoln" by John Drinkwater.)

